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ADDITIONAL REMARKS

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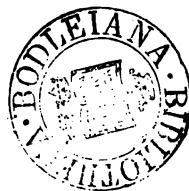
MR THIRLWALL's TWO LETTERS

ON THE

ADMISSION OF DISSENTERS

TO

ACADEMICAL DEGREES.



BY WILLIAM WHEWELL, M.A.

FELLOW AND TUTOR OF TRINITY COLLEGE.

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ADDITIONAL REMARKS,

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SINCE my Remarks on Mr Thirlwall's First Letter were written, a hope which I have there expressed has been extinguished; and I fear that I cannot now look forward to the pleasure and advantage of having him as my companion in those employments, in which my association with him induced me to offer to the public my observations on his arguments. This has been to me a matter of deep and serious regret, both on public and on private grounds; and though I am not called upon, and do not intend, to offer any opinion on the necessity of such a change, I cannot, without doing violence to my own feelings, neglect this occasion of expressing my great sorrow at the event. My regret at this occurrence has proceeded not only from my strong admiration and esteem for his great endowments and elevated character (sentiments which I trust I need not now endeavour to express more adequately), but also from a persuasion, that the differences of opinion between us, so far as they might affect our practical conduct and common aims, would be much narrowed by further explanation; and even a hope that they might possibly, by some means, be so far removed, as to allow us to continue usefully that community of labour which has ever been to me a source of high gratification. In the persuasion just mentioned, Mr Thirlwall's Second Letter has confirmed me; and though

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I shall make a few additional remarks upon what he has said, I hope it will appear that we approach much nearer each other than we did before. This approach to agreement, and the conviction that our mutual esteem has not been diminished by the discussion, are to me most agreeable; and it is a very painful reflexion that the result of the approximation in our views must, so far as I can see, be limited to speculation only.

I certainly wrote my Remarks under the impression that Mr Thirlwall's arguments tended to this result; that, with regard to religious observances, all restraint was wrong, and ought to be abolished: and even now I do not see at what point he would limit this doctrine. I conceived, and conceive, that to admit and act upon this principle, was to declare that we would do, in maintaining such observances, absolutely nothing; that we would be utterly inactive and silent, and therefore, so far as our wishes were to be interpreted by our actions, entirely indifferent and reckless upon this subject. Nor can I discover, in the suggestions of Mr Thirlwall, any thing which would rescue us, to any material extent, from this interpretation. To say that our students may have their religious impressions strengthened by the services of the parish churches of the place, and the influence of its groves and cloisters, appears to me to be to say that they may, as they choose or as it happens, recollect or forget that there is such a thing as religion in the world; to say that they need not suppose that social and stated worship has an authoritative claim upon a Christian, that a visible and public acknowledgement of the truths and hopes of Christianity is a duty. And I do not see that this inference would be much weakened even if we were to add to our parish churches one more place of worship on exactly the same footing; supposing, as the proposal seems to suppose, that those who do not at present frequent any of the existing churches, are allowed still to refuse their attendance to this. Yet I cannot think we should feel self-satisfied while giving room for such an inference. We might permit our pupils to live, if they prefer to do so, from one end to the other

of their academic course, without joining in any worship, or partaking of any religious ordinance; without ever hearing a prayer or a sermon; without finding themselves in a Christian congregation, from the day when they enter the University to the day when they quit it. But I cannot believe, I cannot imagine, that to have a portion of those who are placed under our care, in this condition, would be a state of things which we could reconcile to our views of our duty to them, to our country, and to our religion. Nor should I be at all the more satisfied with such a prospect, if I were told, that by doing this, we leave them to the working of that religious instruction which they have received in the bosom of their own families, and which must be far more efficacious than any which we can bestow. I am most willing to allow the inestimable value and prerogative of those religious affections, recollections, and hopes, which are bound to us by our dearest earthly feelings and remembrances. But it is precisely because of the importance I attach to the religious impressions which the young man receives in a well-ordered family, that I cannot prevail upon myself, the moment he is transferred to our hands, to cast away all external restraint. The religious impressions which the common course of domestic life produces, are made by means of restraints; not only by conversation and advice, but by the regular attendance at stated services, by the seriousness with which all that concerns these is dealt with and spoken of, by the practice of social worship, or by the injunction of daily prayer. If, when these influences cease to operate on youth, no others succeed them; if, when the father and mother are no longer there to remind him of these habits, we stand by and never recall them to his memory; if, when he passes from the circle of common life to place himself under the superintendance of ministers of religion,—of persons bound by their vows, their position, their institutions, to urge religious observances, as a part of religion, on the notice of those about them,—if he then find that he has entered a region where he is left entirely to rest on the remembrance of the past, for the support of

his habits of regular and persevering devotion ; I cannot conceive otherwise than that his religious feelings, which in almost all persons are closely twined with the regard for religious services, will suffer a severe shock, and be more surely weakened and shaken than they will be even by a service which many may attend with an obvious want of devotion. We must do what we can : we believe daily worship to be a Christian duty, and we must further it by the best means in our power. We may lament the inefficacy of these ; but we at least remind our pupils, by our actions and regulations, of what, in our best judgment, they ought to do. We cannot, under pretext of leaving an opportunity for a freer and purer expansion of devotion, look idly on, while crowds are manifestly turning away from all devotion whatever. When it is clear what the Christian student ought to do, it is our business to make rules for his doing it : restraint to this extent is the condition and foundation of all institutions for education which I can conceive ; it ever has been that of those which we administer, and I cannot understand their being conducted on any other principle.

The necessity of such rules is indeed, as I have already said, the foundation not only of *our* ordinances, but of all religious ordinances ; not only of the services of the College Chapel, but of the Parish Church. Human nature requires the observance of times and seasons, of ceremonies and forms, of exercises and repetitions, to suggest, to recall, to mark, to strengthen the trains of serious thought and reverential feeling. Such habits and institutions are standing recognitions and enduring memorials of our Christian profession. They exercise an indirect and unobtrusive, but wide and constant influence on the societies in which they exist ; and if, as I gladly allow, the visible records of the pious and sober feeling of other times, if "our groves and cloisters," our battlements and spires, have a "silent finger" which "points to heaven," and does not always point in vain, I cannot understand why the monuments of the same feeling in our habits and institutions should be supposed incapable of contributing to the same effect ; why the pealing organ,

the well-known liturgy, the long-established orderly distribution of times and offices, the collegiate congregation ever entering and issuing from the consecrated doors with the returning hour, should not also be favourable to the growth of religious thoughts; or why we should be utterly callous to those impressions, arising from such circumstances, by which strangers are often forcibly affected.

But Mr Thirlwall's reply, and indeed the subject, force me to go on to another reflexion. It is said, that however much we may wish that our institutions should thus operate in fostering devotional feelings, they in practice and in fact do not do so. And that this is true to a considerable extent, unfortunately we cannot deny. We must not however do ourselves injustice. In the fact of the imperfect result of our ordinances in making men religious, we have something in common with all other institutions. Though men require stated times and forms and exercises to call their thoughts to eternal things, to guide and warm their hearts, we know well how many share in these offices with little or no such advantage: how many hearts are deaf to the call, disobedient to the guidance, cold to the glow of social worship. I have no wish to make our case appear better by speaking slightly of the devotion of other places of worship; but I conceive that there are many congregations, brought together by other means than ours, of whom an observer might say, nearly what Mr Thirlwall says of ours, that with a large portion it is not a religious service at all, and that to the remainder it is far from impressive and edifying. At least it must be allowed that this case is not inconceivable; and if such an instance should occur in the worship of a parish church, I would ask what would be the remedy which an earnest minister would propose? Surely not that the weekly service should be discontinued, and that a monthly or a yearly service should be established in its stead. Any one would perceive at once that the only hope would be from a remedy of quite another kind: that not less demand on men's time, but a more effective application to their minds, would be the only resource: that for the minister to expect to make them more earnest by giving himself less trouble, to persuade them that

religion was of more importance by giving less time to it, would be a most sad and hopeless experiment.

I am aware that there are great differences between such a case and that of our college worship, but I see no difference which affects the essential character of the case. In the one instance as in the other, the established institution, the regular worship, is a necessary condition of all the good which can be done ; however inefficient the mere form may be, there can be no efficiency without some form, and nothing gained by abandoning the form only. The change to be wished for is, to give additional life to the existing outward form, to add earnestness to the indispensable ceremonial, to make the established service a real worship. Any merely negative measure, any mere abolition of ordinances, any attempt to remedy the inefficiency of rules by simply relaxing them, would, I am persuaded, be felt as an abandonment of a portion of the hope and desire to keep up the reverence for all religious ordinances ; and the more so, the more it was accompanied, to the authors of the change, with a diminution of the previous demands upon their time, occupations, and superintendence.

If indeed it were recommended that we should do more instead of less ; if it were proposed that, besides enjoining attention to Christian observances, we should frequently explain their import, enforce their influence, and join with them other religious instruction ; or if any other way were suggested by which we might add to our form of prayer more life and sincerity, more advantage and satisfaction, than it now possesses, I, for one, should rejoice to profit by such suggestions, and would most gladly cooperate in any plan of this kind which offered a promise of success.

But we are told that with our present system of a "compulsory service," no such expectation can be entertained ; that, under these circumstances, we must not hope to make our worship really religious and devout. I rejoice to say that I cannot subscribe to this doctrine of despair, and that I conceive that I see various reasons which make it impossible for me to do so. I might adduce Mr Sewell's testimony, that, in his College, a voluntary disposition to seek for religious instruction grew up, without any relaxa-

tion of this kind of discipline: I might appeal to smaller societies than our own, in this University; where, I am informed, Mr Thirlwall would find fewer of those differences, which appear to him so disadvantageously to distinguish the service of our chapel from that of a parish church: but I cannot help referring to Mr Thirlwall's testimony, that in our own congregation an advantageous change has taken place, which he believes "has not been confined to the exterior, but extends to the thoughts and feelings of a part of the persons present." It is with reluctance that I make such a matter a subject of discussion; but I may be allowed to ask, if we are advanced so far under our present system, why must we despair of any further improvement? Whatever the causes are that have led to an increase of seriousness and earnestness, I trust that some of them have not yet exhausted their energy; I will not easily believe that their efficacy may not be further extended; with such encouragement, I will not cease to look to the future as a field for hopeful exertion.

When we are told (in opposition, as appears to me, to allowed facts) that no real religion can have a place in our "compulsory service," I cannot but ask whether this is meant to be asserted of a service enforced by compulsion or restraint of *any kind*, or whether the assertion is confined to the *particular kind* of rules which prevail in our Colleges. In my former Remarks, I imagined that the former assertion was intended by Mr Thirlwall, and that "the full consciousness of freedom" was held up as necessary to the efficacy of all religious observances. In this it appears that I was mistaken; and that though the full consciousness of freedom is indispensable to the devotional efficacy of our parish churches, this proposition is not asserted as a general one; and therefore it may possibly be inapplicable to the service of our College chapels, as it certainly is not a feature of family worship, or even of the usual course of social life. The other proposition, in which "prescribed exercises" for religion are condemned, as tending to kill the thing which we mean to foster by them, which seems to me to lead to nearly the same conclusions as the first-mentioned principle, is, it would ap-

pear, still maintained as a general truth; but it is suggested that its enunciation may have been superfluous in the present case. If this doctrine is withdrawn, as having no bearing on the question before us, I have, of course, not a word more to say respecting it; but if this is not done, I cannot agree with Mr Thirlwall, that it is "hard," (meaning by that unreasonably hard,) that he should be called upon to shew how the doctrine is to be limited, so that it shall be an argument against College chapels, and shall not be an argument against parish churches; since, at first sight, it appears equally formidable to both institutions.

But supposing it to be allowed, as I think it must be, except we have to do with a different form of society, and a different constitution of human nature from any we have known, that *some* observances, established and enforced by *some* authority, are necessary to the maintenance of religion, and that restraint and control may be employed in enforcing these observances, without destroying their good effects; we come to the next question, which is the one of real practical importance for us, whether the kind of restraint which is employed in our Colleges is capable of improvement; and whether our regulations may be, by allowable changes, rendered more likely to promote the religious, moral, and intellectual interests of the bodies in which they ~~might~~ prevail, taken in reference to the proper nature and ends of these institutions.

These are, no doubt, most important practical questions; but they are not such as I should judge it advisable to discuss before the public; and I certainly do think that, among other unhappy consequences of the opinions which have been published ~~upon it~~, this has arisen;—that any question of change is become a more complex one than it was before. This circumstance however I now mention, not to attribute blame, but to express regret, and to explain the very narrow limits within which I shall confine my own remarks. I say then, that it appears to me, that the kind of restraint and control which a College may and ought to exercise in such cases, is peculiar, because the nature of the associations and rela-

tions which obtain in such a body is peculiar. The directors and the pupils do not exist insulated from and independent of each other; nor connected, as persons are in common social life, by slight ties of mutual observance and opinion; there is a definite meaning in the rules and habits under which the members of such bodies live together: there is a settled implication of the duty of superintendence and direction on the one side, of docility and deference on the other. What is approved of is, as far as possible, recommended; what is disapproved is, as far as possible, repressed. Hence, what is overlooked is, in fact, tolerated; what is not attempted is, in fact, declared to be undesirable. The mere circumstance of the student's continuance in the enjoyment of the privileges, and under the eye of the authorities, of his College, is a declaration that there are in his conduct no prominent features of evil; that there are no obvious habits with which authority, directed by kindness, is called on to interfere. Now suppose that, all compulsory worship being abolished, we had among our students a large body, (may we not suppose the body would be *very* large?) who, being left entirely to themselves, were obviously, undisguisedly, perhaps obtrusively, alienated altogether from all habits of Christian worship. Suppose that each man's character was, as it would be, well and familiarly known, as one who did, or who did not, attend the services of religion; suppose that persons in College, interested by their position about the habits of the students, should see many of their pupils passing in succession from the religious to the irreligious division; from the apparent profession of Christianity to the palpable disregard of all its ordinances; suppose that there is still no control, no authoritative interposition; I would ask, could we reconcile such a state of things to the constitution of a College; to the general understanding which I have mentioned as its fundamental principle, that what is permitted is in fact not condemned? I confess I cannot conceive one of our Colleges subsisting long under such an administration, without the utter dissolution of all general deference to religion and religious decency; of

all authority, rule, and order, such as now exist among us.

Some peculiar authority and control therefore with respect to religious observances, some *compulsion*, (if men are resolved to use the most offensive word,) is inevitable, if the whole scheme and character of our College administration is not to be subverted. The way in which such authority may be exercised is various; but its exercise must, as I have already stated, in my judgment, be understood as an expression of the disapprobation of the body, when duties, whether of a religious or any other kind, are neglected. And this understanding must, as I conceive, be something very different from a barren fiction; inasmuch as a person who should go on repeatedly and obstinately incurring this disapprobation, ought undoubtedly to be removed from teachers and governors with whom he had placed himself in hopeless enmity.

When men speak of our compulsory services, they are apt to forget that this compulsion operates in a penal form only upon a few persons, the most unlucky of our students in their management of their time, and a still smaller number of very indolent characters or perverse dispositions. With respect to by far the greater number, this compulsion is felt only in the shape of a steady habit, and of a regular distribution of their day; and it appears to me that such a habit is scarcely more inconsistent with a devotional attention to public worship, than it is with private devotion. The student who gives half an hour of every morning to the service of his College chapel, cannot surely be prevented from mixing his own personal prayers with the service, by recollecting what notice would have been taken of his absence.

I cannot agree with Mr Thirlwall that a leading difference between family and College worship is this, that persons are bound together by the most endearing ties in the one case, and are absolute strangers to one another in the other. I regret that he should have expressed such an opinion, because I think it misrepresents our feelings. That consciousness of a common condition, common objects and employments, (and those of a peculiar nature,) which

must pervade the whole congregation; those ties of familiar and confidential intercourse which bind together large portions of it; the general prevalence of friendships hardly less close than family attachments, are circumstances which mainly give to our service its propriety in my mind, and I believe in the thoughts of most of those who feel an interest in it. Nor am I at all disposed to deny that it might be an advantage, if the form of our devotion were more peculiarly adapted to remind us of our special condition and mutual relations; a change which would, it appears, remove some of Mr Thirlwall's objections to the service. It is obvious however that this is a question of detail which it would be irrelevant to discuss here.

Indeed I have I trust said enough on this subject. It is neither my business nor my purpose to defend here the details of our existing College regulations. I have already said that I would gladly join in any attempt to improve them, and I am far from being disposed to reject without consideration such a change in our *weekly* service as Mr Thirlwall has spoken of. If those of the Fellows who are engaged in the instruction of the College, and any of the others who feel an interest and a hope in the object, were willing to communicate to the students "instruction of a really religious kind, which should apply itself to their situations and prospects, and address itself to their feelings," I do not doubt that arrangements might easily be made, so as to give them the opportunity of labouring at this good work, and I can see no chance of any but a most beneficial effect. By such means as this, combined with others, I should hope, with no small degree of confidence, that we might approach to a state of things in which our usual religious service would need no aid of compulsion. As Mr Thirlwall expresses some curiosity concerning the precise extent of my hopes on this matter (Second Letter, p. 8.) I may add, that, inasmuch as there will generally be among our students a few less tractable than the rest, I think it more likely that we should *approach*, than *attain to*, the desirable state of things I have mentioned. Even on this supposition however, much good would be done. And I should consider it among the most valuable parts of such an

improvement, if beneficial impressions were produced upon the minds of the students by the general spirit of the permanent members of the body, in harmony with the official injunctions of those who are charged with the especial business of superintendance and instruction. There never can be a want of accordance between that general spirit and those instructions, without great injury to our efficiency, and disadvantage to all parties. In a body like ours, formed and governed on very liberal principles, in the best sense of the term, it is most desirable that our peculiar official exertions should be supported and animated by the sympathy and good wishes of those who are bound to us only by their general participation in the interests and obligations of our foundation. Those who can discover any method for securing such a result, will indeed be our benefactors; but it is little likely to be brought about by dwelling on the inevitable inconveniences which the exercise of the most necessary control and authority produces.

I have said nearly all that I think requisite to say, on this subject, in which I fear we gain little practical good by discussion. It is the less necessary for me to explain further the application which I conceived might be made of Mr. Thirlwall's principles to other subjects as well as religion, since these principles are allowed by him to admit of the use of ordinances, institutions, and establishments in religion, and of a fixed course of study, and a compulsion with regard to the process of instruction. I will only observe, that if religious feeling be compared with the love of knowledge and of literature, in the points in which, for our purpose, they must be compared, namely the manner in which they may be confirmed by habitual exercise, by opportunity, by the sympathy of our equals, by the influence of age and station, I do not conceive that the difference is so great as Mr Thirlwall represents it; and some of the same difficulties occur in the one case as in the other, when we come to devise positive and imperative arrangements, by which these beneficial influences are to be brought into action.

But my main purpose is answered if it be granted, as I hope it will be, that we must have, in our Colleges, autho-

rity and control exercised with regard to religious observances as well as with regard to other matters ; that we cannot stand by and see our pupils live like pagans ; that we cannot, while we interpose restraint for all other purposes, refuse to employ it in favor of religious decency ; that we cannot profess ourselves powerless on this subject, and expect to meet with deference on all others. I trust it will be allowed that we are not, under pretence of favoring freedom of feeling, to abolish all rules of Christian discipline ; and that we are not to measure the obligations of Christian worship by that performance of it, (most scanty and lukewarm we may with humiliation confess), which has hitherto, partly at least by our own neglect, prevailed among us.

There is one process of change which may sometimes be pursued under pretence of improvement, but which is most pernicious and ruinous. It is, when men alternately allow their practice to fall below their rules, and bring down their rules to the level of their practice. A few such alternations, and sound principle and laudable practice alike disappear ; a few steps on these two fatal feet, and we reach the gates of destruction ; a few turns of this dire “two-handed engine,” and our house falls in ruin around us. I trust this will never be our fate ;—that we shall never, in such pretended liberality, cast loose the bands by which our College habits have hitherto been bound around us ; that we shall not seek, I do not say ease or quiet, (I will suppose we are not the slaves of such motives) but fallacious hopes and imaginary advantages, on a road on which there is no return. Let us transmit to our successors that framework of fixed rules, settled habits, established associations, which has hitherto been our scaffolding in all that we have built and all that we have adorned. It is on this that our value, our dignity, our utility, depend. It is this, at least as one great reason, which makes an admission to our institutions desirable in the eyes of those who are not of our communion. No intelligent and soberminded dissenter, if he had the prospect of sending his son among us, would wish, that, as a preparation to this, our ancient rules and customs should be abolished, the ties of our discipline relaxed, the superintendence of our officers over the morality and religion of their

pupils extinguished. He would admire the general effects of our system as it has been, and he would desire that its general character should be preserved. However hotly he might press the siege of our city, if he intended to inhabit it, he would not wish, in his assault, to ruin all its fairest and most substantial edifices, and to enter it only by making it a heap of ruins.

Though I wish to say little on this question of the admission of the Dissenters, there is an observation which I think I may with propriety make. It would be impossible that Dissenters should be admitted in this place, for the purpose of education, with any advantage to themselves, and without a fatal injury to the present system of instruction, if their admission were accompanied by any alteration of the footing on which the pupil stands with regard to his governors and teachers. The admission has hitherto been a voluntary engagement on both sides; an engagement of superintendance and instruction on the one side, of docility and conformity to rules, on the other. No claim of exemption from rule, no plea of privilege, no peculiarity of condition, is ever urged or admitted; and if cases of non-conformity to general rules have ever become matters of consideration, there has always been, on the side of authority, this ultimate argument, to be used if needed, "*conformity to rules was the condition of your admission.*" I do not conceive that this condition could be altered, that exemptions could be stipulated for, that privileges could be claimed as a right, that peculiarity of condition could be recognized by peculiarity of arrangements, without entirely breaking up the whole scheme of our college government, and rendering almost useless a great part of our existing machinery: without making the admission of Dissenters to our college education a gift damaged in the giving, both for them and for us.

I state this opinion of mine, because I see a very broad, and, I think, important difference, in the line of argument which is followed by different persons who plead for the admission of Dissenters to our degrees. Some, in contending for this concession, maintain that such admission is consistent with all our existing institutions, and

would imply no alteration in our administration of them : and such must, I conceive, be the view taken by those who urge that Dissenters may be allowed to take degrees without inconvenience, because they have hitherto repeatedly gone through all parts of our education except the degrees: for this argument falls to the ground, if they are to be hereafter on a footing quite different from that on which they have hitherto been. But there is another party among the patrons of the Dissenters, who maintain that their clients ought to be admitted, and that though this admission may render great changes in our Colleges necessary or inevitable, we are not on that account to shut our doors; but that we must let in the stranger, and accommodate ourselves to his ways, as well and as fast as we can.

I regret to see that Mr Thirlwall appears to be of this latter opinion. He would obviate the difficulty which our daily worship introduces into this question by abolishing the service altogether; and the subject of the admission of Dissenters to the endowments of the University, he considers to be “one on which at present it is scarcely possible to form anything more than vague hopes or vague apprehensions.”

I rejoice on the other hand to see that another of the Petitioners, than whom no one’s opinion will be listened to with more respect, expresses, and has always expressed, a very different view of the tendency of the Petition. According to him it was not the object of the Petitioners that “Dissenters should come up to the University as if under different banners.—They wished on the contrary that the ancient academic laws should remain in force, and they doubted not that they would be administered in a tolerant and liberal spirit; so that many excellent men who are now shut out from degrees by conscientious scruples, might have the full benefit of academic education, and thereby become interested in the continued support of our institutions.” I understand this as implying that unconditional conformity to general rules, which has always been rendered by the Dissenters who have hitherto been among us—many of them with honour

to themselves and satisfaction to all who have known them here. And I am not at all disposed to deny that such an understanding would remove many of the difficulties which appear to me to follow from legislating in agreement with the Petition.

Nor am I careless of the principle of another argument urged by the same person ; "that such a modification of the academic law would bring it into nearer accordance with the statute law of the realm, and strengthen the foundations of our establishment." The Universities are, of all our institutions, those in which alterations of law should be least readily and lightly admitted ; yet even with regard to these institutions, it would be impolitic and unreasonable to maintain that their regulations must be, under all circumstances, rigidly immutable. It belongs to their office to be permanent and stable, while other things fluctuate and change : yet even this office must have a relation to other parts of the constitution of the country. That a material and an irrevocable change has taken place in this constitution within the last few years, it would be an unprofitable folly to deny. I shall most gladly allow the measures of this change to have been as wise as they were bold, when I see reason to believe that the state has found a new position of equilibrium, as permanent and prosperous as that from which it was, perhaps unavoidably, moved. I trust this result is far from hopeless ; I am willing to be taught that it is not far distant ; I hold it to be the part of every Englishman who loves his country to lend his aid to this end ; and it would be most unwise to do aught that might frustrate such a result, by clinging to feelings which can no longer lead to good, and to restrictions which have lost their meaning. At the same time, I trust that I see this feature also in the occurrences of our days ; namely, that the most beneficial of all our institutions, the Established Church, is not intended to be in any degree weakened or discountenanced by those who have had the task of bringing about the change to which I have referred. I find that in two of the main steps of this change (the abolition of the Test Act, and the Roman Catholic Relief Bill) this prin-

ciple, the inviolate preservation of the Religious Establishment, was stamped as the law of the land by the very act of the change ; a declaration being, in both these cases, enacted to be made, that the privileges acquired in virtue of these acts, should not be used with a view to injure or violate the National Church. This circumstance appears to me to be characteristic of the present temper of our legislation ; its aim being to grant to Dissenters powers and privileges which give to our social system a less exclusive form, but at the same time to declare that a regard to the continued and unimpaired welfare of the church is the condition and stipulation on which these changes are made. It would appear to me therefore inconsistent with the spirit of our most recent precedents, as well as pregnant with evil in its special consequences, if persons were admitted to the full enjoyment of that which we may call the National Education, which has both in theory and in fact so close a connexion with the National Church, without in this case also enforcing such a condition and stipulation ; without requiring a similar declaration. Whether such an admission under this condition is at present necessary or advisable, I shall not presume here to give an opinion. I have said, I trust, all that is necessary to explain my views of the bearing of the general discussion upon that particular question which induced me to come before the public, and I should be very sorry to think that it would ever be necessary for me to resume my pen upon this subject.

